

Lawyers for Climate Action NZ

Founded in 2019, Lawyers for Climate Action NZ is an incorporated society with over 350 members from across Aotearoa with the shared mission of using the law to enable more effective action on the climate crisis.

The law is one of the most powerful and high-impact tools for addressing climate change. Through their network of volunteer lawyers, Lawyers for Climate Action NZ uses the law as a mechanism to hold decision-makers to account, increase the ambition of climate policies and targets, and ultimately drive systemic change. To date, their members have provided more than \$4m worth of free legal services for the climate through Lawyers for Climate Action.

As a successful recipient of the Kaupapa of National Significance Fund, Lawyers for Climate Action NZ will receive two hundred thousand dollars over two years.



Examples of their mahi:

In November 2023, **Lawyers for Climate Action filed New Zealand's first greenwashing litigation against Z Energy (New Zealand's second-largest emitter of CO2)**, challenging their claim that they are "in the business of getting out of the petrol business". This is an important case as the law in NZ for greenwashing has never been tested in a NZ court before. This case is going to clarify the law for all NZ businesses, and ultimately help ensure that consumers across the country aren't misled.

[-https://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/consumer-nz-inc-v-z-energy-ltd/](https://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/consumer-nz-inc-v-z-energy-ltd/)

In July 2023, they successfully challenged the Minister for Climate Change's decisions on the Emissions Trading Scheme. The Emissions Trading Scheme puts a price on emissions by charging certain sectors or the economy for the greenhouse gases they emit. It is New Zealand's main policy lever for reducing emissions. However, the Minister didn't follow the advice of our independent expert climate change body, the Climate Change Commission, and set the carbon price lower than recommended. We successfully challenged this decision, which resulted in the Minister accepting the Climate Change Commission's recommended settings. It restored the price of carbon and ultimately resulted in a \$3B impact to the NZ carbon market.

They also have an ongoing high-profile case against the Minister for Climate Change and Climate Change Commission, arguing that New Zealand's climate targets fall short of what is required by our Paris Agreement commitments and our central climate change framework legislation.

LCANZ have also been supporting local hapū and Māori in Kaipara over the last few months as they **oppose cuts being made by the Kaipara District Council to climate mitigation and adaptation funding.**

How are you working with Iwi, Hapū, Māori?

"One of our strategic priorities over the next three years is building on our partnerships with Māori organisations and leaders. We have a Māori and Tikanga Issues Subcommittee, comprised of leading lawyers working across the intersection of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and climate change, and have several work programs focused on supporting Māori by using the law to address the causes and impacts of climate change."

Prioritising disadvantaged communities

The climate crisis will disproportionately affect those already most disadvantaged in society. But those same groups tend to be the ones least able to access the legal system. Lawyers for Climate Action connects community groups and individuals with pro bono lawyers willing and able to support them on climate-related legal issues.

Lawyers for Climate Action also works to help shape the development of more effective climate laws and policies, and supports community groups to put forward strong submissions. It also looks to enforce and develop the law by engaging with decision-makers and bringing strategic litigation when necessary.

Combined Community Trusts of Aotearoa acknowledges this entity's unique role within the climate sector and potential for both strategic and systems impact, as well as community-level outcomes.

To date, their lawyers have given at least four million dollars worth of free legal services.

For more info: <https://www.lawyersforclimateaction.nz/>

